

RUSSIAN

Paper 9782/01
Speaking

Key messages

Part 1: candidates need to choose a card of interest to them and be able to express their opinions in accurate Russian.

Part 2: candidates need to prepare a topic related to a country where Russian is spoken. In order to do well, candidates should choose a subject which is of interest and about which they can offer evidence of in-depth research and opinion.

General comments

The vast majority of candidates were very well prepared and demonstrated a wide range of language skills. The chosen topics were usually well researched and the majority of candidates spoke enthusiastically. The very best were able to take the lead in the conversation and/or respond to unpredictable questions.

Comments on specific parts

Part 1 Discussion of article and related themes

By far the most popular card was No 4 'Family', with Card 1 'Lifestyle' attracting virtually no candidates.

The majority of candidates used the preparation time effectively to extract the main points of the article. They were able to express their opinions confidently, showing good understanding of the text. Many candidates displayed a very good level of grammatical accuracy and a wide range of structures. The few weaker candidates lacked detail in their answers and displayed some inconsistency in grammatical accuracy.

Part 2 Prepared topic

Most candidates chose topics of interest to them. They showed very good factual knowledge and were able to analyse and express their opinions with confidence. This year there was again an impressive range of topics, including, as usual, aspects of the lives and ideas of historical or literary characters including Gagarin, Makhno, Rurik and Akhmatova. Other topics included the Trans-Siberian Railway, Russian Dissidents, Pussy Riot and the Man'pupunyor area.

The very best had researched their topics in depth and were able to talk with real enthusiasm, showing, in some cases, a very extensive knowledge. The few weak candidates had an insecure knowledge of their chosen topic and were not really able to develop the discussion properly without following the Examiner's lead.

Language

The level of language was sometimes higher in Part 2 than in Part 1, which is unsurprising, but many candidates achieved similar marks in both parts. The vast majority of candidates showed an excellent knowledge of Russian at this level, using a wide range of lexis and structure to express opinions with confidence. Pronunciation and intonation was always good or very good. Weaker candidates showed some English interference and some basic errors in e.g. noun/adjective agreement.

Common errors for all candidates included problems with numerals and/or expressions of age, problems with aspect, dative constructions (particularly with verbs taking the dative), and confusion between the use of *все* and *вся*.

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Paper 9782/02 Reading and Listening
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Key messages

- In preparation for this component, candidates should have experience of reading and listening to a wide range of authentic materials related to the topics in the syllabus.
- In comprehension exercises, candidates need to focus on conveying the required information in clear language, but there is no need for full sentences.

General comments

Part I: Reading

Text 1: Candidates need to produce answers to questions in Russian which to some degree manipulate the language of the original text. Full sentences are not required.

Text 2: Candidates need to respond in English. Full sentences are not required.

Text 3: Candidates need to translate, into Russian, a short passage which is thematically connected to the preceding two texts. Useful vocabulary can be found in Texts 1 and 2, although it may have to be adapted for the translation passage; for example, verb and case forms may need to be changed.

Part II: Listening

It is advisable to spend about 1 hour on this section. Candidates should be familiar with the individual listening equipment before the examination so that they feel confident.

Text 1: Candidates need to respond in Russian. They should focus on giving only the information required for the answer, rather than full sentences or lengthy sections transcribed from the audio. The information has to be conveyed successfully, so candidates should aim for as high a degree of linguistic accuracy as possible.

Text 2: Candidates need to respond in English. Complete sentences are not required; candidates need only write the information required to answer the questions.

Text 3: Candidates must address all four bullet points in the summary and answer in concise English in order not to exceed the word limit. Complete sentences are not required.

Comments on specific questions

Part I: Reading

TEXT 1: Most candidates obtained a mark of 6 or higher. This text was about town and country life.

Question 1

Virtually all candidates scored the full two marks for this question, identifying the fact that the author lived in the countryside and now lives in the town.

Question 2

This required the specific answer that country dwellers *often* live without hot water. To answer that there was no hot water in the countryside was not sufficient.

Question 3

This two mark question caused few problems.

Question 4

Most candidates scored the mark here but some candidates needed to use the correct tense in relation to the question e.g. из-за больших лесов was perfectly acceptable but есть большие леса was not.

Question 5

Candidates needed to read the text carefully to gain this mark. Several candidates confused лечиться and вставать.

Question 6

This was a more challenging question. A pleasing number understood the phrase correctly but marks could not be awarded for confusing the word дороги with дорогой.

Question 7

Nearly all candidates recognised the fact that there were clubs in the country. Candidates needed to answer this question in the plural.

Question 8

To gain this mark, candidates needed to mention communication of some description with each other. Разговаривали and общались were acceptable answers.

TEXT 2: most candidates scored more than 6 marks on this text which discussed growing population numbers, but few scored full marks.

Question 9

Nearly all candidates recognised the fact that the European population will decrease.

Question 10

Closer analysis of the text was needed to score the mark on this question. Candidates needed to be specific about Ireland having the highest birth rate in the EU (not Europe).

Question 11

A pleasing number of candidates identified the fact that the birth rate fell at the start of the 1990s, but candidates needed to mention the fact that it fell *sharply* to gain the mark. Most candidates gained the second mark for this question and answered that the birth rate is now above the European average. Reference needed to be made to now/today or the fact that already the birth rate is above the European average. Some candidates confused the word for “already” with “still” and were not rewarded.

Question 12

Virtually all candidates understood this correctly.

Question 13

Again, more specific answers were required here. Most candidates recognised the word машина as “car” but the answer required “purchase of a car” to gain the mark. A pleasing number of candidates correctly

identified this. Similarly, for the second mark, merely “education” was not sufficient. Candidates needed to specify that they spent money on education for their *children*.

Question 14

A good number of candidates understood the word постоянная for permanent and scored a mark here. For the second mark, candidates confused поддержка семьи, - family support (in the form of benefits), with support from their family in the emotional sense.

Question 15

Most candidates answered this question correctly.

TEXT 3: the standard of translation this year was very high, with several candidates obtaining full marks.

The most challenging sections of the translation proved to be:

‘Some European governments’ – a large proportion of candidates correctly translated the word “some” as “некоторые” but there were attempts to use the words несколько and многие here which altered the meaning.

‘Too low’ – a small number of candidates correctly identified the word низкое here, with most choosing the word маленькое instead which was perfectly acceptable. Several also used the word очень or гораздо as an alternative to слишком but this was not acceptable.

‘They give mothers’ - Most candidates conjugated the verb correctly. Marks could not be awarded for incorrect renditions дают or дадут or the use of the past tense.

‘Special benefits’ – there were several attempts at translating the word for special, with varying degrees of success. Специальные and особые were among the correct variants but other attempts such as способные and отличные or необычные were not rewarded

‘In the hope that’ – this proved to be the most challenging phrase in the translation. Among the acceptable variations were в надежде, что and с надеждой, что. There were several misplaced attempts with the use of чтобы - надеются, чтобы and в надежде, чтобы. The verb “to wish” was tolerated as an alternative to “hope” – желая or желают что.

‘Most demographers’ – большинство was the desired rendition here. Большая часть was accepted as an alternative to большинство but not incorrect renderings which could change the meaning e.g. больше часть. Многие was not correct.

‘Is the main factor’ - самый важный фактор. The superlative was required for this mark. The word главный was also acceptable.

‘Influencing’ - just over a third of candidates correctly chose the verb влиять here but the preposition на was required in order to score the mark. Several attempts using иметь эффект were also rewarded.

Part II: Listening

TEXT 1: Candidates scored well in this exercise. Several candidates scored full marks in this interview with a TV presenter.

Question 17

All candidates answered correctly that Alexander started to work in TV while he was at school.

Question 18

Around half the candidates understood the meaning of республика. Attempts included журнал and журналист which were not rewarded.

Question 19

Most candidates scored the two marks available. Some confused грамотно with grammatical so did not gain the mark but candidates were still able to score the two available marks if they mentioned the other two qualities - говорить с хорошей дикцией and заинтересовать людей.

Question 20

This presented few problems.

Question 21

Both elements were required here to score the mark. Some candidates omitted высокие in high technology so could not be rewarded.

Question 22 + 23

Most correctly understood that he did not have time for a girlfriend and correctly identified the qualities he looked for in a girl.

TEXT 2: This text, featuring an interview with a dietician, proved the most challenging of the listening tasks. Only one candidate scored full marks.

Question 24

Most candidates started well and identified that people do not have time to prepare healthy food.

Question 25

Candidates needed to differentiate here between health food shops and shops selling healthy food (the latter was not rewarded). Several candidates misunderstood the word полезный for useful in this context. Candidates were more successful with the other point – cheap restaurants selling healthy food.

Question 26

There were various incorrect attempts by candidates to translate the word for brain, including cholesterol and blood pressure.

Question 27

Candidates needed to be precise to score this mark. There were various answers including encompassing warnings on packages but candidates needed to say that these were *health* warnings.

Question 28

A pleasing number of candidates correctly identified that Russians claim to eat well. However, some candidates claimed the opposite entirely, confusing the ни of они with не. They needed to listen carefully to the recording of они хорошо питаются.

Question 29

Many candidates correctly identified the packaging but needed to mention the ingredients/contents to score the mark.

Question 30

A small number of candidates got this correct. The answer needed to contain reference to frozen versus fresh produce.

Question 30

A pleasing number of candidates correctly identified the word for producer or where the fruit was grown.

TEXT 3: Summary.

This question, though challenging in parts, was well done by the majority of candidates, most of whom scored at least 6 of the 10 marks available. It should be borne in mind that full sentences are not required and that credit cannot be given for any work beyond the first natural break after 100 words. The majority of candidates kept within the word limit but several candidates exceeded the word limit and their subsequent points therefore could not be marked.

Most candidates scored the three maximum marks for the first bullet point. Nearly all candidates understood that some kind of licence or permission is now required for taxi drivers, although some confused the word for permit with decision or order which was not accepted. If разрешение was misunderstood for the first point, candidates were not subsequently penalised in scoring the next two marks. Nearly all candidates made reference to the fine of 5000 roubles for not having a permit.

For the second bullet point candidates needed to be more explicit in their description of the requirements of the new law. Merely mentioning half yearly technical checks was not enough to score a mark here. Candidates needed to mention the vehicles. Similarly with medical checks, candidates needed to make reference to the taxi drivers and the fact that they needed to have *regular* medical checks. Most understood the need for a taxi light on the top of their vehicle.

For the third bullet point, most candidates grasped the need to install a taximeter in the vehicle, but fewer understood the need for the cost of instalment being borne by the passengers. Fewer still understood that the installation of a taximeter might invalidate their warranty. Many candidates correctly comprehended that young drivers had lost their jobs but candidates needed to use the correct tense to score the mark. A point was also rewarded to candidates who identified that 5 years driving experience is now required, but they needed to mention “driving experience” as opposed to just “experience” to gain the mark.

For the fourth bullet point, several candidates struggled with the word for “limit” and others took guesses at the word auction but were not sure what the auction was for.

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Paper 9782/03 Writing and Usage
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Key messages

Part I Writing

When choosing a title in the examination, candidates should:

- spend some time reading all the titles
- think carefully about what each topic is and what is being asked in the title
- think about whether they have something to say in response
- consider whether they possess vocabulary in the topic area
- make a very rough plan before choosing a title
- decide what they think and write an essay plan.

When writing the essay, candidates are advised to:

- use the plan to construct a real argument
- write an introduction, discussion and a conclusion
- keep the essay title in mind throughout
- check whether the points made are relevant
- avoid repetition
- write in paragraphs, making a clear, relevant point in each one
- try to use a variety of language and demonstrate linguistic ability
- write complex sentences when appropriate, but without losing the thread of the argument
- remember to try to interest and/or persuade the reader.

Part II Usage

The three tests of verbal knowledge, structural manipulation and other aspects of usage cover a wide range of structures, but should not present major difficulty to candidates who have broad experience of the language and an awareness of the need for accuracy in writing. It is useful to be familiar with the format of the tests: this will help candidates to be aware of the type of knowledge required. Intelligent, careful reading of texts in the target language, attention to personal linguistic development in terms of structures, and experience of working through similar tasks can all help in preparation for this part.

In this part of the examination candidates are recommended to:

- read each question carefully and make sure they understand the sense of the sentence
- avoid leaving any questions unanswered
- use their experience of and 'feel for' the language as well as their knowledge when deciding on an answer (e.g. ask themselves 'Have I heard or seen a similar sentence?')
- proofread carefully their answers to Exercises 1 and 2.

General comments

On the whole, candidates were clearly well prepared for this paper. Candidates are advised to spend about 1 hour 30 minutes on Part I (writing) and about 45 minutes on Part II (usage). 40 marks are available for Part I, in which candidates write one discursive essay of 250-350 words in Russian, and 20 marks for Part II in which candidates complete exercises which test their knowledge of Russian vocabulary and structure.

All the candidates completed all sections of the paper, and all followed the instruction to write in dark blue or black pen.

Comments on specific questions

Part I

Candidates write one essay from a choice of 5 titles. Candidates should write between 250 and 350 words in Russian. It is unlikely that an essay shorter than 250 words will include sufficient content and range of vocabulary and structure to be able to access the entire range of marks available. A maximum of 24 marks out of 40 are awarded for the accuracy and linguistic range of the essay, and a maximum of 16 marks out of 40 for the development and organisation of ideas.

The majority of candidates wrote a plan for the essay. As mentioned above, an essay plan is, it goes without saying, of great help, if not essential, in writing a well-organised and coherently argued essay. In addition, a plan allows the candidate to note down examples, vocabulary and structures which s/he may wish to include in the essay. The essay plan is not assessed. Many candidates wrote the essay on alternate lines of the page, allowing them to make corrections or additions to the essay neatly. In a surprisingly large number of cases the presentation of the work was rather messy and the standard of handwriting poor. Particular difficulty came with the handwritten versions of the letters л, д, б, м and в.

Accuracy and linguistic range is assessed out of 24 marks and the essay does not have to be grammatically without fault to be awarded full marks in this category. In order to access the highest marks here, candidates should aim to include a very wide range of vocabulary appropriate to the title they have chosen in addition to demonstrating the ability to use complex sentence patterns and structures appropriately and accurately. Up to 16 marks are awarded for the development and organisation of the ideas in the essay. Here, in order to access the highest marks, candidates must present an answer to the title which demonstrates that they have understood the question, considered its implications and prepared a well-planned and thoughtful response illustrated with appropriate examples. Examples from anywhere in the world may be used.

In order to be able to access the full range of marks available for this essay, candidates would be well advised to choose a title about which they have clear ideas and views. They need to consider the question from different angles and to draw a clear conclusion. Examples should be incorporated into the essay and used to support strands of the argument. It is very possible that the candidate will have, at the initial planning stage, more material than can be used in an essay of this length. The skill, of course, comes in selecting the arguments and examples to be used to address the question and the most successful answers reflected the candidates' ability to do just this. Less successful were those essays in which candidates appeared to write everything they knew about the topic, thus losing sight of the question.

Question 1

- (a) There were not enough responses to this question to make a comment here.
- (b) This was quite a popular question and the candidates who chose to answer it often used examples from their own experience to make their argument. The most successful and convincing essays came to a clear conclusion about whether or not the candidate agreed with this statement and gave reasons and justification for this conclusion.
- (c) The candidates who chose this question often communicated a degree of fact in support of their argument and, while factual or scientific knowledge was not expected, examples from real life added weight to the candidate's argument. This is clearly an issue about which candidates have strong opinions and candidates were able to communicate their opinions clearly, using appropriate lexis.
- (d) There were not enough responses to this question to make a comment here.
- (e) This was a popular question and candidates often drew on examples from their own experience to illustrate their argument. Candidates who answered this question usually had the range of lexis necessary to communicate their ideas and this is clearly an issue about which candidates had clear opinions. Some candidates failed to address clearly the idea of "самая серьезная проблема"; it is essential that candidates answer the questions as it is set, not just write all they know about the topic of the question.

Part II

Exercise 1

The five questions in this section tested the candidates' knowledge of verb conjugations. Any acceptable correct version of the infinitive given in brackets in the context of the given sentence was allowed. Verb conjugations were generally well known, with many candidates scoring full marks on this section. Most difficult proved to be **Questions 2 and 5**; the conjugation of *приехать* in particular challenged a number of candidates.

Exercise 2

Candidates should be aware that in order to be awarded the mark for this question the sense of the original sentences must be preserved. For example, in **Question 8** the order of events must be communicated correctly.

There were many candidates who were able to manipulate the language as required in this section and this exercise proved to be a good test of knowledge of the structure of Russian. Candidates were usually able to use "который" successfully (**Questions 7 and 10**).

This exercise was generally completed successfully and a good number of candidates scored at least 4 marks out of 5.

Exercise 3

As for the previous two exercises in Part II, many candidates did very well in Exercise 3. In preparing for this type of test, candidates should revise thoroughly the declensions of nouns and adjectives and the cases which follow different prepositions in Russian. Most candidates are clearly able to identify which case endings are needed in certain constructions and also to choose correct prepositions and correct verb endings.

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Paper 9782/04 Topics and Texts

Key messages

In both Parts, candidates should:

- read the question with care, and think about what they are asked to do
- plan their answer and organise their material with close relation to the question
- define the terms of the question in the introduction
- keep the question in mind throughout
- support any assertions with close references to the text and/or film
- make sure quotations, if used, support the argument
- make sure all quotations are accurate
- use paraphrasing and allusion as an alternative to overlong quotations
- take care to include analysis and argument, and avoid narrative
- demonstrate knowledge by using it as supporting evidence for the argument
- exclude information that is irrelevant to the question.

Part I: Cultural Topics

Candidates should:

- make sure that they learn the necessary vocabulary to write about their topic when preparing for this Part
- remember that the rubric requires reference to only two of the works. Writing about all three risks a lack of depth
- try to demonstrate their knowledge of underlying themes, and mention comparisons and links between the two works
- proof-read carefully after writing, paying special attention to verb forms and agreements.

Part II: Literary Texts

In context questions candidates should:

- make sure they analyse the extract showing how its content is related to the rest of the work
- avoid using the passage as a springboard for a general essay
- be careful to analyse, rather than re-tell the story of the extract.

General comments

Paper 4 is divided into two sections carrying equal marks. Part I requires an answer for each question of between 250 and 400 words in Russian. 20 marks are available for content while 10 are available for language. Part II requires an answer for each question of between 450 and 600 words in English. 25 marks are available for content while 5 are available for structure.

Though there were natural differences in the level to which candidates had prepared for this paper, generally speaking, the standard of content knowledge in the answers was high. Many candidates appeared to have studied their chosen works in great detail, and a number of answers showed evidence of extensive background reading. The degree to which candidates were able to select appropriate material from their stock of knowledge and adapt this to the question they had chosen to answer varied. The best answers showed the ability to exclude irrelevant information which, though interesting and accurate, did not add weight to the argument. A surprising number of candidates did not adequately address the question, providing an answer for a question they had prepared rather than for the one on the paper. Many essays

contained numerous quotations which supported the points being made. Some candidates would have gained higher marks had they been able to quote accurately and integrate the quotations selected into their own discourse. The language of the answers in both English and Russian varied from outstanding to satisfactory. This year, the use of appropriate literary critical language was more variable than in previous years. It should be noted that in order to access the higher range of marks, candidates should aim to write to the upper recommended word limit. Not all candidates appeared to have written a plan. Those who had done so generally wrote in a more organised manner, producing answers which were awarded higher marks as a result. Unclear handwriting was more of a problem this year, making it difficult sometimes to establish what a candidate wanted to say.

Comments on specific questions

Part I: Cultural Topics

Question 1

- A** This was by far the most popular question this year. Many answers contained perceptive detail and comparisons, especially with regard to the two films, though few attempted to provide vital basic information about the characters, settings or historical contexts. This year, more answers were well balanced in that they discussed aspects of both works fairly equally and addressed the second part of the question in adequate detail. This question produced a range of original opinion as to who best understands what it is to be young. All views were accepted, provided they were justified. A minority of candidates made assertions without providing supporting evidence or relied too much on notes which were often irrelevant.
- B** Some candidates appeared unsure as to the meaning of *смельшой*, sometimes thinking it means *joyful* or *brave*. Most candidates selected isolated moments from their chosen works, but did not describe them in sufficient detail or relate the events to the general lives of the characters of the films and text.

Question 2

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 3

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 4

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 5

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Part II: Literary Texts

Question 6

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

- C There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 7

- A There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B This question attracted a considerable number of responses, most of which were perceptive, well informed and skilfully organised. Most candidates were able to offer excellent descriptions of the novel's narrative structure with at least some analysis of Lermontov's narrative techniques and their effects on the reader as he/she struggles to interpret the meaning of the novel and to decode the enigma that is Pechorin. A minority of candidates turned the essay into a character study instead of addressing the question correctly.
- C While candidates generally were able to provide ample evidence that Pechorin is 'a thoroughly nasty piece of work', only the best answers discussed in adequate detail his potentially "redeeming features". Some candidates hedged their bets, overusing words such as 'perhaps' or providing a series of rhetorical questions without adequate relevant discussion thereafter.

Question 8

- A There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 9

- A There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B Candidates were usually able to identify various types of comedy within the play, describe comic features of characters and situations and comment on linguistic humour generated by dialogue or an individual character's discourse. However, frequently the tragic elements of characters were not adequately explored nor was the comedy contrasted with the serious messages which emerge from the words and deeds of characters.
- C Candidates generally displayed at least a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the characters, but many were less able to focus on Chekhov's overarching ideas. Some answers identified character-specific ideas, but did not go on to relate these to the play's important messages and themes.

Question 10

- A There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 11

- A There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B There were few answers to this question. Most did not provide adequate detail of the plot or those aspects of Soviet society satirised in the text for the full significance of the happy ending to be demonstrated.
- C This was a popular choice of question, but very few candidates addressed it correctly. Many ignored the word *comic* in the question, focussing on the word *masterpiece* instead, but without providing an analysis or evaluation of the various forms of comedy within the text. Some were able to offer quotations, but not all were able to make their points convincing by explaining the context and significance of their quotations. A significant minority of candidates did not provide adequate

detail about characters and plot, while some appeared uncertain as to whether they were discussing a work of prose, a play or a film.

Question 12

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C** There were too few answers to make a general comment.

Question 13

- A** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- B** There were too few answers to make a general comment.
- C** There were too few answers to make a general comment.